

PHILIPPIANS BACKGROUND

When and where did Paul write Philippians?

Rome 60-63 AD

Pros:

1. Acts 28:30 -Paul is under house arrest in Rome for over two years.
2. Acts 28:16- Paul is guarded by a single Roman guard and was allowed to live by himself.
3. Acts 28:17, 30-31 Paul is allowed to have visitors and he is allowed to teach them the Gospel, both of which he does.
4. Phil. 1:13- Paul would stand before Caesar ultimately to have his fate decided
5. Phil. 4:22- Paul would have gotten to know Caesar's household through his long imprisonment
6. It gives natural explanation to "Caesars household."
7. It allows for enough time to pass for Epaphroditus to go, get sick, recover, and for the passing of news between Rome and Philippi.
8. Co. 1:1 states that Timothy was in Rome with Paul.
9. This theory never came into question until 1800.

Cons:

1. He crushes the Jews in Chapter 3 in a similar fashion as he does in Galatians and 2nd Corinthians. This points to a time earlier than Paul's Roman imprisonment. (This point is admitted but proves nothing)
2. Acts 27-28 – Luke doesn't mention Timothy is with Paul in Rome though Paul mentions Timothy is with him in Phil. 1:1

Caesarea (Palestine) 58-60 AD

Pros:

1. Acts 24:27 – Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea was at least two years so communications could have been sent back and forth.
2. Acts 23:35 – Luke mentions Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea in the Praetorian of Herod. This was also the residence of the Roman Procurator and headquarters of the Roman Garrison in Palestine.
3. Acts 24:23 Paul has freedom to have visitors.
4. Phil. 1:6, 16 – Make the defense that Paul is waiting for a verdict. This seems to coincide with the events taking place in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-27) There is no mention of a defense being made in Rome. (Acts 28:16:31)
5. Paul's harsh language in the beginning of Chapter 3 is best described to have been in Caesarea because of the Jews that caused Paul's imprisonment. (Acts 23:9-10)

Cons:

1. The distance between Philippi is huge so getting back and forth would have been very difficult.
2. The Praetorian guard and Caesar's household have a more natural explanation if applied to Rome.
3. Caesarea did not allow for the kind of preaching that Paul was able to do while in prison.
4. There is no mention of Philip the Evangelist who was hospitable to Paul prior to Paul's arrest.

(Acts 21:8)

5. Caesarea doesn't suit the final verdict. He would never have gotten out from under the grip of Felix without paying a bribe. (Acts 24:26) and then as soon as Festus comes into the picture Paul appeals to Caesar. (Acts 25:6-11)
6. This was first believed in 1799 (it is young theory) and today it isn't very popular.

Ephesus

Pros:

1. This makes the journeys between Philippi and the place of Paul's imprisonment more believable because the distance is much shorter compared to Rome and Caesarea.
2. It explains the close connection between the Romans and the Philippians.
3. Acts 19:22 and Phil. 1:1 mention that Paul and Timothy are in Ephesus together.
4. In 2 Cor. 11:23 – Paul lists several imprisonments that Luke doesn't record in Acts. This points to Paul possibly being imprisoned while he was in Ephesus.

Cons:

1. Acts 23:25 – talks about supporting the weak. This was an important part of Paul's ministry in Ephesus and it is not talked about in Philippians.
2. Acts 19, 20: 17:31, Phil. 1:15-17 – Paul wrote of the church being divided over him but that was not necessarily the case in Ephesus.
3. Acts 18:2, 24-26, Phil. 2:19-21 – Paul speaks harshly about the Christians around him in comparison to Timothy and yet his close friends Priscilla and Aquila were in Ephesus with him.
4. First suggested in the 1900's



Sources used:

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, the Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, and handout compiled by Anna Cleghorn 11/97